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March 24, 2023

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21404
aa_wam@mlis.state.md.us

Senator Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and Environment
Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West
Annapolis, MD 21401
aa_ehe@mlis.state.md.us

Dear Members of the Ways and Means and Education, Energy, and Environment Committees,

On behalf of the Worcester County Board of Education (WCBOE), I write to express our strong opposition to revised House Bill 0119/Senate Bill 0199 (HB0119/SB0199), now entitled County Boards of Education - Curriculum Guides and Courses of Study - Requirements.

The WCBOE has previously voiced its opposition to HB0119/SB0199 in its original iteration due to its redundancy with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) and the precedent these bills set in opening up curriculum matters to legislation.

Unfortunately, the revisions to HB0119/SB0199 demonstrate an intent to overtly disregard the collective opposition received and further push the boundaries of our governmental structure. The broadening of this legislation is troubling, and the WCBOE fervently opposes this attempt to infringe on the authority of our local Boards of Education and the State Board of Education.

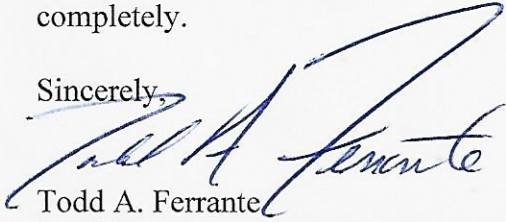
Under COMAR, the State Superintendent of Schools already holds the authority to withhold state funds from local education agencies (LEAs) regarding non-compliance, once again rendering HB0119/SB0199 altogether redundant.

Further, the WCBOE firmly believes that the adoption and/or development of curriculum and instructional materials should lie with LEAs, as they can design these materials to not only align with state standards, but to reflect the needs of local students. To legislate otherwise is willfully usurping the authority of local Boards of Education, who have been elected to represent the interests of their distinct communities.

Lastly, this legislation penalizes LEAs for the authorization of student opt-outs of course material "in a manner that is not approved by the State Board." The vague nature of this language not only impedes on a parent or guardian's rights, but undermines the authority set by LEAs to enact opt-outs in alignment with previously established guidance.

Again, the Worcester County Board of Education strongly opposes House Bill 0119/Senate Bill 0199, and we implore you to return an unfavorable committee report or withdraw this legislation completely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd A. Ferrante". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Todd A. Ferrante
President, Worcester County Board of Education

Cc: Worcester County Commissioners
Senator Mary Beth Carozza, District 38
Delegate Wayne Hartman, District 38C
Delegate Charles Otto, District 38A